

Sukhomlinsky News



Work and happiness

Dear reader,

I hope you are keeping well.

This month's stories from Sukhomlinsky's Ethics Anthology are again from the section entitled 'Harmony in work, happiness and duty'.

This month I received news from South Korea about the sales there of the Korean translation of **Each One Must Shine**. I am happy to report that the book has been reprinted twice and has now sold over 2,000 copies.

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill

Stories from An Ethics Anthology

Why did the pigeons fly to Oleg?

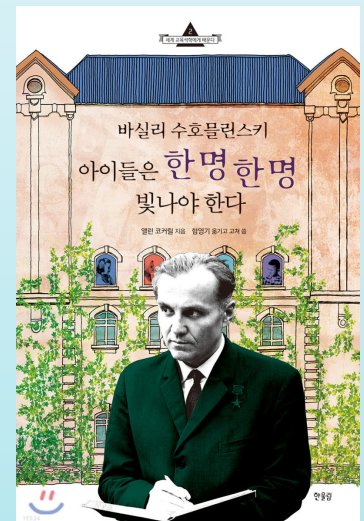
In a little village school, in the middle of the schoolyard, stands a beautiful little wooden house on a tall post. It has windows and doors, just like a real house. Pigeons live in it.

Every day children bring food for the pigeons. Some bring wheat, some bread, some buckwheat. They take it in turns to feed the pigeons. The child whose turn it is to feed the pigeons calls them saying 'Gul-gul, gul-gul!' The pigeons take the food, but they too frightened to come close to the children. 'Why are they frightened of us? Why won't they come to our arms?' wonder the children.

On the last day of school, the teacher asks the children to keep coming in turn during the holidays to feed the pigeons. The summer holidays fly by, and the first day of school arrives. Each student, as they get ready for school, thinks, 'I wonder how the pigeons are going?' Each one takes a pocket full of feed.

When they are all in the schoolyard, the teacher suggests, 'Children, I would like you to spread out all over the schoolyard, standing by yourselves. I want to see who has been feeding the pigeons over the summer.'

The children run and spread out all over the schoolyard, standing by themselves. Each one begins to say 'Gul-gul, gul-gul,' and to scatter feed on the ground. The pigeons take off from their little house and they all fly to Oleg. They peck right up close to him. One pigeon even lands on his shoulder, and another lands on his arm. But they do not seem to notice the other children.



Stories from *An Ethics Anthology* (cont.)

One drop at a time

Nikita in grade four was very lazy. He did not want to work properly, and he failed grammar. He was given extra work to do over the summer. He put his grammar textbook on his desk and gave a deep sigh. He had to complete two hundred exercises. How could anyone do that much work?

A day passed, then a second and a third. Soon a week had passed, and all Nikita had done was look at his book and sigh. He felt really depressed.

Nikita got tired from doing nothing. He sat and looked out the window. Next to the window an empty bucket was placed under a down pipe. Water was dripping from the down pipe into the bucket. As he had nothing else to do, Nikita sat all day and watched the water dripping into the bucket. In the evening Nikita went outside to look and saw that the bucket was half full of water.

The next morning, the bucket was full. Nikita was amazed. The bucket had filled with water just from those tiny drops! With a deep sigh Nikita opened his grammar book. Then he opened his exercise book.

Five oak trees

Two schoolboys, Mitya and Seryozha, went into the forest with their teacher. The teacher dug up three little oak seedlings for each of them and said, 'Take these oak seedlings home and plant them near your house.'

Mitya brought his oak seedlings home. He dug one hole and planted the first seedling. He looked at the second seedling and decided that the roots were too weak. He threw it out on the road. He looked at the third seedling and decided the branches were too thin, so he threw it on the road as well.

Seryozha planted his three oak seedlings, then came out onto the road and saw two seedlings lying in the dust. He picked them up and planted them next to his three seedlings. Sergei watered his seedlings, and they grew and produced new leaves. But Mitya forgot all about his seedling and his little tree withered.

Many years passed. Mitya and Seryozha grew up and became fathers. Mitya had a little son named Dmitrik and Seryozha had a little son named Sergeika. One day Dmitrik asked his father, 'Dad, why are there five oak trees growing next to Sergeika's house and none growing next to ours?'

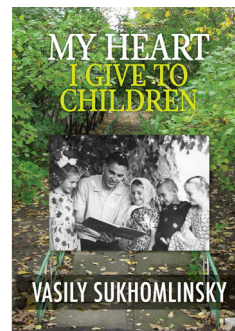
His father did not reply.

Petrik and Mariika

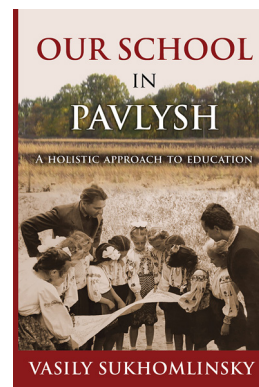
Petrik is studying in grade one. His sister Mariika does not go to school yet. She will start school next year. Petrik has one big problem. He is lazy. He knows that if is going to learn to read, he has to pick up a book, open it, and read aloud for half an hour every day. But Petrik does not want to pick up a book. He does not want to read. It is more fun to play outside. Petrik comes home each day, drops his school bag, eats, and runs outside to play. In autumn he plays ball, in winter he skates. And his books just lie there.

Half a year passes. All the other children can read well, but Petrik can hardly sound out a single word. One day his teacher comes to speak to Petrik's mother and says, 'If Petrik does not read every day, he will have

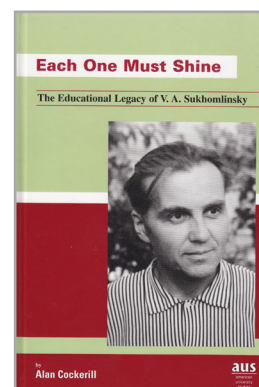
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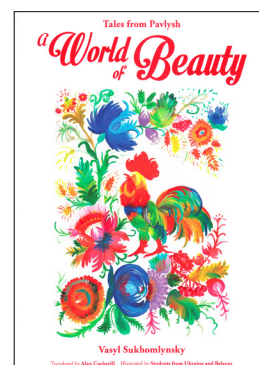
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to repeat grade one.'

Petrik sits listening to his teacher's words and feels very ashamed. But Mariika is delighted. 'That will be great! If you keep Petrik in grade one, I will be able to go to school with him and study in the same class!'

Petrik's face turns red and tears glisten in his eyes. Then Mariika continues, 'I can already read.' And she takes a book from the table and begins to read.

'You read as well as my best students!' says the teacher.

The teacher goes home, but Petrik keeps sitting by the table, thinking. 'I don't want to be weaker than Mariika! I'll make myself study...'

Petrik opens his book and begins to read. Outside the snow is sparkling, the sun is shining, the sparrows are chirping, and his skates are lying under the bench... Petrik so much wants to go out and play! But the thought of studying in the same class as Mariika is terrifying, and he reads and reads...

Now, every day, when Petrik comes home from school, eats, and grabs his fur hat to go outside, little Mariika asks, 'Petrik, are we still going to be studying in the same class?'

As soon as he hears these words, Petrik throws aside his fur hat and sits down to read.

The best ruler

Nikolai and Roman sit next to each other. Nikolai nearly always gets an 'excellent' mark for his written work, and never gets any mark less than 'good'. Roman only manages to get 'satisfactory'.

Today the teacher handed back the children's exercise books with the dictations they had written at the previous lesson. Nikolai was again awarded 'excellent', but Roman was not awarded any mark at all. That meant that he had made lots of mistakes. The teacher had written, 'You need to work harder.' Roman felt sad.

After their Russian language lesson, the students went to the workshop for their manual arts lesson. The teacher gave each student a piece of wood and asked them to make a ruler. Nikolai and Roman worked side by side. Nikolai's ruler turned out uneven and crooked, but Roman's was beautifully even and smooth. The teacher said, 'Roman has the best ruler. I am awarding him an 'excellent' mark. Nikolai, I am afraid I cannot give you any mark. You need to work harder.' Nikolai felt sad.

The lesson ended. Roman asked the teacher, 'Can I please have the ruler I made?'

'Yes, you can take it,' said the teacher.

Roman took his ruler back to the classroom and put it on his desk, next to the exercise book in which he had received no mark for his dictation.

How Yura educated himself

Yura studies in grade three. He is lively, restless, and bright, though a little lazy. Sometimes Yura does not want to do his homework. But he loves playing ball. One day when he was playing, he fell and broke his leg. The doctor came and put a plaster cast on his leg and said he would have to stay in bed for a month.

Yura lay in bed feeling sorry for himself. He could not get up, and playing ball was out of the question. It was hard for the boy to just lie there. He decided to think about something interesting so the time would pass more quickly. Yura remembered how his teacher had told the children about Nikolai Ostrovsky. That writer was unable to get out of bed, and was even blind, but he managed to write a book.

'I will work, too,' decided Yura. 'It is only my leg that is broken. I will read books and study.'

And that is what he did. His mother put his textbooks, exercise books and a pen on his bedside table. As soon as Yura woke up he set about his lessons. He solved problems, wrote grammar exercises and read stories. 'My friends at school are studying for four hours each day, but I will work for five hours a day,' the boy decided.

Sometimes, when Yura woke up, he did not feel like picking up a book. But then he felt ashamed. He thought to himself, 'Is that how a real man would act? It is only my leg that is broken. I must work with my head.' And with those thoughts, he picked up his book.

The wet shirt and the dry shirt

A mother had two sons, Ivan and Sergei, each about twelve years old.

When the summer holidays began, the mother said to her sons, 'Take the hoes, and go and work in the fields.'

Just before sunrise the mother woke her sons. They took their hoes and went to weed the sunflowers.

In the evening, the brothers returned from their work. Ivan's shirt was wet, but Sergei's was dry.

The boys washed and had dinner. Ivan went straight to bed, knowing that he had to work in the morning. But Sergei went out into the yard, sat on a bench and listened to music.

The next day, as soon as the brothers came home, their mother looked at their shirts. Again, Ivan's was wet, but Sergei's was dry.

That night the sons slept, and their mother sat by their bed until midnight. When she looked at Ivan, she smiled, but when she looked at Sergei, she gave a deep sigh.

He became a worker

A mother had three children: ten-year-old Natasha, seven-year-old Olya, and little Oleg. He was only two years old. He often asked his mother and sisters questions, like, 'What is that?' or 'How come a pigeon flies, but a chicken doesn't fly?'

On Saturday the mother said to her daughters, 'Let's clean up the yard. There's a lot of rubbish there.' The mother, Natasha and Olya each took a small broom and began to sweep the yard. They gathered all the rubbish in a pile, carried it to the vegetable patch, and burnt it.

While the rubbish was burning, little Oleg noticed a piece of straw in the yard and picked it up and took it to the fire. He handed it to his mother and said, 'I picked up some straw.' His mother took the piece of straw and threw it into the fire.

'Today is a special day for our Oleg,' the mother told her daughters.

'What sort of special day?' asked Natasha and Olya in surprise.

'Today is the day he became a worker.'

How Fedya did his homework

Fedya studies in grade three. He does not like doing his homework. He comes home from school, drops his schoolbag on the floor, eats, and goes out to play until dusk. Then in the evening he sits down and writes his exercise very quickly, without much effort. He often does not manage to solve his maths problem.

One day Fedya comes home from school and eats. He wants to go out and play, but his mother says, 'Do your homework first, and then go out to play.' Fedya sits at the table, quickly writes his exercises, and solves his maths problem. Today's problem is easy to solve.

Fedya's mother sees that he has written very messily. 'Write it out again neatly,' she tells him. Fedya does not want to write it again, but he has no choice. He copies out the exercises and the problem, but his mother is still not satisfied. 'You have written it messily again. Write it neatly, or you will not be going out to play today.'

Fedya cries for a long time. He really does not feel like writing it out again. But he thinks, 'If I write it messily, mum will make me write it out again.' And he writes it all out neatly.

That night Fedya's father comes home from work and asks Fedya's mother, 'How is Fedya studying? How did he do his homework today?'

'Fedya is working very well,' says his mother proudly. 'He wrote his homework once and was not satisfied with it. He wrote it out again and

was still not satisfied with it. Then he wrote it out a third time, beautifully. Show dad, Fedya.'

Fedya shows his exercise book to his father. 'Well done, Fedya!' says his father proudly. 'You will grow up to be a fine human being.'

Fedya bows his head, and his face turns red.

Happiness and work

A poor woman had twin sons. When the sons were seven years old, the mother gave them each a bucket, took them by the hand, and said, 'Let's go, my sons, and find wisdom.'

They walked for a whole day, then for all of a second day, and on the third day they came to a tall mountain.

'Within this mountain,' said the mother, 'Wisdom is scattered in tiny gold nuggets. In order to obtain wisdom, you have to fill your bucket with those tiny nuggets of gold. Go and find wisdom.' And she gave each of her sons a small spade.

The twin sons were very similar to each other in appearance: blue eyes, black eyebrows, and pale faces... but their souls were different. One son was hard working, the other was lazy. The lazy one took his bucket and spade and walked away from the mountain. 'I will go to the river,' he told his hard working brother. 'I will catch fish and make fish soup.'

But the hard working son sat by the tall mountain and began to sift through the soil with his little spade. He would take a spadeful of soil and sprinkle it on the ground, and sometimes a tiny nugget of gold fell out. He would put that in his bucket.

Many years passed. The lazy son remembered his hard working brother and decided to go and visit him and see if he was still alive. He walked for a day, then a second day, and on the third day he came to the mountain. But the mountain was in a different place to where it had been many years earlier, when they were just seven years old. His hard working brother was standing next to the mountain, and his bucket was full of tiny gold nuggets.

The lazy brother was amazed. He realised his brother had sifted through the whole mountain of soil and had obtained wisdom. And he, lazy one that he was, had only learned to catch fish and make fish soup.

'What are you going to do now?' the lazy son asked his brother.

'I am going to go and find happiness for our mother.'

'Are you going to buy her happiness with your gold?' asked the lazy son.

'Happiness cannot be bought,' answered the hard working brother. 'Happiness is found through work.'